

BRIGHTON GRANGE HALL
(St. Luke's Parish Hall)
263 Brighton Dam Road at the
corner of New Hampshire Avenue
Brighton
Montgomery County
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-1018

HABS
MD,
16-BRL,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BRIGHTON GRANGE HALL

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Location: 263 Brighton Dam Road, at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue, Brighton, Montgomery County, Maryland

Present Owner: St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Present Use: At the time that the documentation was undertaken in November of 1990, the hall was being used for storage. It was demolished in October of 1991.

Significance: The Brighton Grange Hall was the only extant Grange Hall in Montgomery County, and one of the few in the State. Its presence--at the crossroads of this small farming community--was a reflection of the economic development of this once agriculturally based area. The Grange Hall was the center of the community's educational, political and social activities during the late 19th- and early 20th-century.

The National Grange--or the Patrons of Husbandry--was America's first national farmers organization. The Grange formed an alliance of farmers for the purpose of advancing the knowledge, and protecting the interests, of farmers. The Grange was founded in December of 1867 by Oliver Hudson Kelley of Minnesota, at a meeting held in Washington, D.C. Its formation was largely in reaction to the railroad monopolies' control over transport rates, and loss of profit to marketing middlemen. In addition to its educational and political functions, the Grange also served as the social center for many farm communities. By 1875 there were approximately 800,000 members from 20,000 lodges nationwide.

The Brighton Grange was one of twelve Granges formed in Montgomery County in 1873-74. It was organized on the 2nd of April 1874 by Joseph T. Moore of nearby, Sandy Spring, who was then the first President of the Maryland State Grange. The Brighton Grange had one of the largest memberships in the area, attracting farmers from the surrounding communities of Tridelphia, Sunshine, Brinklow, Ashton and Sandy Spring. The hall was erected in 1886 and was the site of agricultural meetings as well as dances, concerts and dinners.

In 1890 the Brighton Grange Hall was the location of the first meeting of the Farmers Institute of Maryland, in cooperation with the Maryland Agricultural College (University of Maryland). This organization later became known as the University of Maryland Extension Service--a state-supported educational program for farmers.

By the 1920s, the Grange Hall functioned primarily as a social club. In 1932 the Brighton Grange was disbanded. In 1935 the hall was conveyed, at a nominal fee, to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, located on the adjacent property. It then served as the parish hall for the church, and a kitchen and bathrooms were added.

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The Grange Hall is a two-story, two-bay-by-four-bay, rectangular building with a gable-front roof, measuring approximately 45' x 25'. It is a wood frame building with german siding--now covered with asbestos shingles--resting on a rubble stone foundation. It has six-over-six-light, double-hung sash windows at the side elevations--the first-story windows being longer than the second--with a plain surround. A round, wagon-wheel-like window appears in the front gable end. The windows at the south front and north rear facades (second floor only) are four-over-four-light sash. The double-door entry, with transom window and paneled doors, is covered by a simple gable-front vestibule. The gable roof is covered with raised-seam metal.

The first floor interior consists of a single open hall (exclusive of the kitchen/bath addition) with a stage at the rear. It has twelve-foot ceilings, walls and ceilings covered with beaded-board, wooden floors and symmetrically molded window and doorway trim with bull's-eye corner blocks. To the side of the stage at the north rear is a partially enclosed two-run stairway. The second floor is partitioned into a hall and an office, to the rear, with a large meeting hall to the front. The meeting hall has a vaulted, beaded-boarded ceiling which meets the tops of the window surrounds. Three school-house light fixtures hang in the meeting hall.

Sources:

Becker, Janet Wileox. "Building Description and Historical and Cultural Significance of Brighton Grange Hall," (unpublished paper), May 1982.

National Register of Historic Places nomination form for La Prairie Grange Hall (La Prairie, Ws.) and Church Hill Grange Hall (Hopkinsville vic., Ky). two of the few Grange Halls listed.

Interview with St. Lukes' parishioners Buzz Hussman and daughter, Lucy Hussman, and George McCrory.

Compiler:

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